

FREE

# Veterans Corner Newsletter

Hopi Veterans Services: "Putting Hopi & Tewa Veterans First"

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## The State Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee vote unanimously to endorse SCR1009 which will formally acknowledge and honor 10 Hopi Code Talkers

Submitted by Louella Nahsonhoya, Public Information Officer

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On Jan. 11, the Hopi Tribal Council passed Resolution H-024-2011, authored by Eugene Talas, Director of Hopi Veterans Affairs and endorsed by Hopi Vice Chairman Herman G. Honanie to formally recognize Rex Pooyouma and Orville Wadsworth as additional Hopi Code Talkers. The resolution passed unanimously by a vote of 12-0.

Previously, the Hopi Council passed Resolution H-039-2007 acknowledging and recognizing the following men as Hopi Code Talkers during WWII: Franklin Shupla, Warren Koiyaquaptewa, Frank Chapella, Travis Yaiva, Charles Lomakema, Percival Navenma, Perry Honanie Sr., and Floyd Dann, Sr., all who were assigned to the 323rd Infantry Regiment of the 81st Infantry Division, known as the "Wildcat Division".

In early Sep. 2010, the Director of the Office of Hopi Veterans Services was notified that Mr. Rex Pooyouma was identified by the U.S. Army Center of Military Studies as a ninth Hopi Code Talker and in Oct., 2010, the Office of Hopi Veterans Services was provided with military documentation citing Mr. Orville Wadsworth as a Hopi Code Talker. Mr. Wadsworth's name was submitted to the U.S. Army Center of Military Studies for validation and shortly after Veterans Day 2010, Mr. Wadsworth was confirmed as the tenth Hopi Code Talker.

During World War II, Mr. Rex Pooyouma was assigned to the 380th Bombardment Group and Mr. Orville Wadsworth assigned to the 90th Bombardment Group, with the Fifth Bomber Command, Fifth Air Force, U.S. Army Air Force. Both were selected and trained as part of a secret Native American Code Talker communications network to transmit secret-coded messages using their Hopi Lavayii in the Pacific campaign.

On Jan. 18, during the 16th Annual Indian Nations and Tribal Legislation Day at the State Capitol, Senator Jack Jackson, Jr. (D), sponsored and introduced SCR1009, to the Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee to formally honor and recognize the Hopi Code Talkers and their contributions to this Country and the State of Arizona. SCR 1009 would also encourage schools to teach about the contributions of the Hopi and other Native American code talkers.

In a packed standing-room only crowd, heartfelt and emotional testimonies were heard from Hopi Chairman LeRoy Shingoitewa, Hopi Veterans Affairs Director Eugene Talas and family members of the Hopi Code Talkers.

"These Hopi men were humble and did not talk about what they did in combat. A cleansing ceremony is performed to purify them before they return to their homes in the villages. They did not share their stories with anyone and lived the rest of their lives with memories only they knew about", said Hopi Chairman LeRoy Shingoitewa. "All Hopi code talkers are now deceased and we feel it is important that the state of Arizona and this great nation of ours know the history of what our people did for this country".

Veterans Affairs Director Eugene Talas said, "The Hopi people are very humble and don't expect any glory or recognition, but for the most part they are supportive that we are finally recognizing the Hopi code talkers".

(Continue on page 2, More State Senate Honors Hopi Code Talkers)

### Upcoming Events:

- Feb 14—Valentines Day
- Feb 14—Arizona Statehood Day
- Feb 21—Presidents Day

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Elidia Chapella, widow of Frank Chapella, addressing Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee.



Hopi Code Talker Family members and Hopi Veterans witnessing testimony and senate committee vote on Hopi Code Talker resolution.

Certain combat Veterans who were discharged from active duty service before Jan. 28, 2003 have until Jan. 27, 2011 to take advantage of their enhanced health care enrollment opportunity through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"While there is no time limit for Veterans to apply for the VA health care they earned with their service, I highly encourage this group of combat Veterans to take advantage of the enhanced enrollment window to use their health care benefits through this simplified process," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "VA has health care eligibility specialists online and at every medical center eager to help Veterans take advantage of this opportunity."

The enhanced enrollment window was provided for in Public Law 110-181, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. That law gave combat Veterans who served after Nov. 11, 1998 but separated from service before Jan. 28, 2003, and did not enroll before Jan. 28, 2008, three years, beginning on Jan. 28, 2008, to apply for the enhanced enrollment opportunity.

These Veterans will still be able to apply for health benefits with VA after Jan. 27, but will have their status for receiving VA health care determined under normal VA procedures that base health care priority status on the severity of a service-connected disability or other eligibility factors. This would mean some Veterans could face income or asset-based restrictions, as well as delays in establishing their VA health care eligibility while their disability status is determined.

The law does continue to provide the enhanced health care enrollment window to combat Veterans who were discharged or released from active service on or after January 28, 2003. For these Veterans, the five-year enrollment period begins on the discharge or separation date of the service member from active duty military service, or in the case of multiple call-ups, the most recent discharge date.

Veterans can apply for enrollment online at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez), by contacting VA at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or with the help of a VA health care eligibility specialist at any VA medical center. Go to [www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp](http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp) for locations. For more information regarding enrollment, visit VA's eligibility site at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility).

### **More State Senate Honors Hopi Code Talkers**

The Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee voted unanimously to endorse a resolution which would formally acknowledge and honor the 10 Hopi Code Talkers. All Senators expressed their thanks to family members of the Hopi Code Talkers and acknowledged support from everyone.

Later that same day at the Joint Protocol Session on the Senate Floor, Chairman Shingoitewa was a featured speaker and spoke of hard economic times on the Hopi Reservation.

"Hopis believe our ways of lives have sustained us this long" said Chairman Shingoitewa. "Oraibi on the Hopi Reservation is the oldest continuously inhabited village on this continent, since 900AD. Economically we may be poor, but we are rich in culture. We are not a gaming Tribe, but we have natural resources on our land which we want to develop. We want to start working with the State Government to develop partnerships. We have the best coal in the country that is clean and efficient and want to support you in renewable energy. We are looking at a rail spur and invite you to help us. We need to start respecting and trusting one another, this can only result in a win-win situation".

The day was a day of celebration for all Hopis, and as Maxine Wadsworth daughter of Orville Wadsworth tearfully said, "this helps bring closure for us".

Hopi Tribal Council has recommended the design and purchase of a new bronze plaque to add Mr. Pooyouma and Mr. Wadsworth as Hopi Code Talkers to be displayed at the Hopi Veterans Memorial Center monument. (A bronze plaque was previously dedicated on Nov.11, 2009 with names of 8 Hopi Code Talkers). **Hopi Code Talkers: Franklin Shupla, Warren Koiquaptewa, Frank Chapella, Travis Yaiva, Charles Lomakema, Percival Navenma, Perry Honani Sr., Floyd Dann Sr., Rex Pooyouma, and Orville Wadsworth.**

For more information, contact Eugene "Geno" Talas at the Hopi Veterans Affairs Office at 928-737-1834 or by email at [hopivets@yahoo.com](mailto:hopivets@yahoo.com).

Maxine Wadsworth, daughter of Orville Wadsworth, at Senator Jackson's press conference speaking on behalf of all Hopi Code Talker Families.



## 3rd Annual Arizona Military Women's Conference Veteran Registration Form—April 30 & May 1, 2011

### Keeping Us Connected

☐ Military Woman   ☐ Guest

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry Date \_\_\_\_\_ Discharge Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check Age group:   ☐ 18-29   ☐ 30-45   ☐ 46-60   ☐ 61-75   ☐ 76+

☐ Check here if you would like to speak to a counselor at the conference.

A variety of workshops will be available in break-out sessions. Topics includes: Education, Employment, Health, Estate Planning, Family Law, Living with Trauma, Professional Image and Planning for Your Future.

Call Shirley Vega 480-785-2683 or 602-689-4270 with any questions regarding registration.

Registration is limited and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. No registrations will be taken after the cut-off date of April 1, 2011.

Mail to: Registration Chair, Arizona Military Women's Conference, 3839 N. 3rd Street, Suite 209, Phoenix, AZ 85012 or fax to 602-297-6691.

Email to Shirley Vega, [savegal1967@yahoo.com](mailto:savegal1967@yahoo.com), or Gabe Forsberg, [gforsberg@azdvs.gov](mailto:gforsberg@azdvs.gov)

If you want to donate to help with the cost of this conference contact ADVS at 602-255-3373 (Main Switchboard). Checks must be made out to Veterans Donation Fund and mailed to: Financial Services Division, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, 3839 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Phoenix, AZ 85012.

***Hosted by the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services***



The Arizona Veterans' Service Advisory Commission invites all veterans, veteran service organizations and members of the community to a town hall style meeting on Saturday, March 12, 2011 from 8:00 a.m. until noon. It will be held at Chinle School District Administration Bldg, US Hwy 191 Route 7, Chinle, AZ 86503.

The nine-member Commission, appointed by the Governor, is dedicated to serving the past and present military service personnel in Arizona. To accomplish this, the State has been divided into four regions with two Commissioners representing each region. In a continuing effort to unify and represent Arizona veterans, the Commission is conducting the meeting in its Region 2, consisting of Coconino, Navajo, Apache, & Gila Counties.

The purpose of the regional meetings is to engage and educate the members of the community, local officials and veterans as to the issues as they pertain to Arizona veterans. In order to facilitate this discussion, the Mayors/Town Managers and County Supervisors within the region have also been invited to attend. The agenda for the meeting includes an open forum/town hall discussion after concluding the general business portion of the meeting.

### **AZ Department of Veterans' Service Officer Visit**

Tanya Dooline, Veterans Service Officer, AZ DVS, during a recent visit, conducted VA benefits assistance for Veterans who reside on or around the Hopi Reservation. Her next visit to Hopi will be on Thursday, February 17, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at the Hopi Veterans Services office, Hopi Guidance Center Administrative Building. She will assist Veterans with VA compensation and pension applications and medical enrollments. All Veterans and widows seeking help can stop by during the visit. To better assist you in submitting VA claims, please bring copies of: DD Form 214 (military discharge); marriage certificate; social security card for self, spouse, and children; birth certificate of self, spouse and children; divorce decrees; death certificates (deceased Veterans); award letters from federal, state or tribal entities; and any other documentation as supporting evidence for VA claims. Call Geno at (928) 737-1834 to make an appointment or to inquiry about this service.



Ms. Dooline, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, assisting Hopi Veteran in applying for VA benefits.

### **DOD Announces Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration Program**

The Department of Defense announced today its program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. The program will:

- Thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.
- Highlight the service of the armed forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the armed forces.
- Pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
- Highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to the military research conducted during the Vietnam War.
- Recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

DoD representatives will coordinate with other federal agencies, veteran groups, state, local government and non-government organizations for their input in Vietnam War commemoration activities. For more information call 877-387-9951 or visit the official website at <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/>.

### **American Legion Hopi Post #80 Color Guard at 16th Annual Indian Nations Day**

American Legion Hopi Post #80 had the honors of posting colors during the 16th Annual Indian Nations and Tribal Legislative Day on January 18, 2011, during the opening of the Arizona State Senate session. Chairman LeRoy Shingoitewa, The Hopi Tribe, was a featured speaker and Hopi Code Talker families were in attendance seated in the public gallery. Post 80 members also were in attendance as moral support during the senate committee meeting on the resolution to honor the Hopi Code Talkers. The resolution passed the committee and will be forwarded to the senate rules committee.



## **VA Expands Outreach to American Indians, Hawaiians, Alaska Natives New Office to Serve as Advocates for Tribal Veterans**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced the creation of a new Office of Tribal Government Relations to ensure the more than 200,000 Veterans who are American Indians, Alaska Natives, Hawaiian Natives or are part of the Alaska Native Corporations receive the VA benefits they have earned.

“There is a long, distinguished tradition of military service among tribal peoples,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “VA is committed to providing these Veterans with the full range of VA programs, as befits their service to our nation.”

About 200,000 Veterans are represented by the 800 tribal governments officially recognized by the United States. Although VA has long provided benefits to Veterans in tribal lands, the new office will further strengthen and expand that relationship.

Stephanie Elaine Birdwell, an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation from Oklahoma, has been selected as the office’s first director. A former social worker, she has spent nearly 15 years working on tribal issues with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and, most recently, the Bureau of Indian Education.

She will oversee a six-person office responsible for “establishing, maintaining and coordinating a nation-to-nation, federal-tribal relationship,” according to a VA briefing.

The office has a charter that officially extends to Veterans who are American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Alaska Native Corporations.

## **VA Publishes Final Regulation to Aid Korean War Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange Will Provide Easier Path to Health Care and Benefits**

Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Korea will have an easier path to access quality health care and benefits under a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) final regulation that will expand the dates when illnesses caused by herbicide exposure can be presumed to be related to Agent Orange.

“VA’s primary mission is to be an advocate for Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki “With this new regulation VA has cleared a path for more Veterans who served in the demilitarized zone in Korea to receive access to our quality health care and disability benefits for exposure to Agent Orange.”

Under the final regulation published today in the *Federal Register*, VA will presume herbicide exposure for any Veteran who served between April 1, 1968, and Aug. 31, 1971, in a unit determined by VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) to have operated in an area in or near the Korean DMZ in which herbicides were applied.

Previously, VA recognized that Agent Orange exposure could only be conceded to Veterans who served in certain units along the Korean DMZ between April 1968 and July 1969.

In practical terms, eligible Veterans who have specific illnesses VA presumes to be associated with herbicide exposure do not have to prove an association between their illness and their military service. This “presumption” simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits and ensures that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

Go these links to learn about Veterans' diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp> and birth defects in children of Vietnam-era Veterans at [http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth\\_defects.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth_defects.asp).

VA encourages Veterans with covered service in Korea who have medical conditions that may be related to Agent Orange to submit their applications for access to VA health care and compensation as soon as possible so the agency can begin processing their claims.

Individuals can go to website <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm> to get a more complete understanding of how to file a claim for presumptive conditions related to herbicide exposure, as well as what evidence is needed by VA to make a decision about disability compensation or survivors benefits.

Additional information about Agent Orange and VA’s services for Veterans exposed to the chemical is available at [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange)

The regulation is available on the Office of the Federal Register website at <http://www.ofr.gov/>.

*2011 Statewide Symposium in Support of  
Service Members, Veterans & Their Families*



**ARIZONA COALITION  
FOR MILITARY FAMILIES**  
BUILDING SUPPORT FOR ALL WHO SERVE

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**June 7 - 8, 2011**

**DESERT WILLOW CONFERENCE CENTER - PHOENIX, ARIZONA**

**The 2nd Annual Symposium will feature:**

- 2 days of programming focused on increasing knowledge, skills & abilities for serving and supporting the military and veteran population
- Opportunities to network with representatives from the military, government & community
- Five tracks with diverse learning opportunities
- Exhibitor fair with programs and resources to assist service members, veterans & their families
- Experiential displays of military equipment
- Continuing education units

Registration will open in April at: **[www.ArizonaCoalition.org](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org)**

Questions? Please email: **[info@arizonacoalition.org](mailto:info@arizonacoalition.org)**

*The Arizona Coalition for Military Families is a public/private partnership focused on building Arizona's statewide capacity to serve and support all service members, veterans, their families and communities.*

**Iwo Jima Flag Raising Commemoration  
Sacaton, Arizona**

On February 19, 1945, a large contingent of Marines landed on Iwo Jima. On February 23, 1945, a Marine patrol pushed over the topmost ridge of Iwo Jima on Mt. Suribachi and within minutes swung a flag-bearing pole into position - a symbol of all Americans who fight for this Nation's freedom and the freedom of others around the world.

On February 19, 2011, Ira H. Hayes American Legion Post 84 on the Gila River Indian Community in Sacaton, AZ, will commemorate the 66th Anniversary Iwo Jima Flag Raising and pay honor to all brothers and sisters who sacrifice life and limb; who have a sense of honor; who bring honor on themselves and their Country.

Saturday schedule includes parade at 9:00 a.m. with military flyover and ceremonies to follow at the Mathew B. Juan - Ira H. Hayes Veterans Memorial Park.

For more details and information you can contact the Ira H. Hayes American Legion Post 84 at (520) 562-8484 or via email at [ihpost84@gilanet.net](mailto:ihpost84@gilanet.net).

We are always looking for stories on our active duty troops. If you want to submit an article on your family member, you can email us the write-up and photo by the 15th of each month. Or you can bring in the picture and we can scan it. Our telephone number is (928) 737-1834 or you can email us at [hopivets@yahoo.com](mailto:hopicvets@yahoo.com).